

CASE STORY

# INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND RESILIENT - MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA



## AGENCIA DE COOPERACIÓN E INVERSIÓN (ACI) DE MEDELLIN Y EL ÁREA METROPOLITANA

FOUNDED: 2002

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 51

### CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

International cooperation, FDI attraction, knowledge sharing.

**KEY CHALLENGE:** Delivering customized learning exchanges at scale and capturing capture good practices and lessons learned.

## CONTEXT

The story of Medellín, Colombia, is one of extraordinary resilience. Beset by urban violence in the 1980s and 90s, the capital of the state of Antioquia has shed its past of drug violence and crime to become an example of urban transformation. Over the past 20 years, sound political leadership, a committed public sector, and smart policies have greatly reduced crime and homicides. Investments in infrastructure have brought architecturally innovative libraries, parks, and transportation to poorer neighborhoods. Various elements of this transformation have been documented in a manual of best practices titled the Medellín Lab.

Municipal authorities from Colombia and abroad, increasingly look to Medellín to learn about its most successful policies, includ-

ing its approach to citizen security, social inclusion, education, urbanism, and groundbreaking investments in public transportation infrastructure, particularly its world-renowned integrated public transport system.

Since 2009, eager to respond to this demand, the Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión (ACI Medellín) incorporated a new strategy and team to share its local development lessons with the world. In the past decade, the agency has played an important role in strengthening the implementation of Medellín's Development Plan through international alliances to an extent that even this plan made internationalization and knowledge sharing a key goal for the city. The ACI Medellín is responsible for managing international cooperation initiatives and increasing business and investment flows. To date, more than 600 visiting delegations were hosted and more than US\$800 million in foreign direct investment and more than US\$50 million in international cooperation were brought into the region according to ACI.

*Medellin Lab enabled ACI Medellín and the local authorities, to share the key aspects of Medellín's context that make this process possible. These keys for sharing are: Public Private Alliances, Resilience, Creativity and Innovation, Continuous programs, Citizen engagement and joint leadership, sense of belonging from the citizens". María Luisa Zapata, ACI Medellín*



*"Medellin is a live laboratory of diverse experiences linked to a permanent recuperation and evolution of the community, based on tolerance and respect among all of its citizens. This is the essence of the Medellin Lab, to be able to share this local ingredients which build a different territory" – Sergio Escobar, ACI Medellin*

## CHALLENGE

While ACI had experience from facilitating and coordinating over 600 visit requests per year, they faced the challenge of how to go beyond just offering best practices. They wanted to transform into an active and creative knowledge broker. Moreover, the reliance on a range of city departments to deliver the best local knowledge made it logistically difficult to coordinate study tours, long-term technical cooperation agreements, and presentations from local policy implementers. Accordingly, ACI management recognized the need to further strengthen its institutional capacity as a center of excellence, particularly in the area of knowledge exchange. It sought to move from a somewhat ad hoc approach to handling visiting delegations in a more systematic and strategic program of study visits and knowledge-sharing events.

## STRATEGY

Taking advantage of its strong enabling environment, ACI wanted to improve its institutional and operational capacities to share knowledge within the organization and with local partners in order to better deliver on its mandate. It identified gaps on how it captured lessons from local government partners and from the Medellin and metropolitan governments as a whole. After participating in the Second High-Level Meeting on Knowledge Hubs in Seoul, Korea, in 2015, it reached out to the World Bank to receive support through the Organizational Knowledge Sharing (OKS) program. In 2016, a technical assistance engagement was agreed upon and organized jointly by the Leadership, Learning, and Innovation Unit in the Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions vice-presidency and the Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice.

## RESULTS

As part of the technical assistance provided by the World Bank Organizational Knowledge Sharing team, ACI was able to significantly enhance its capacity to share Medellin's experiences with other cities. ACI has systematically incorporated the knowledge sharing methodology and tools to position knowledge at the center of their work as a cooperation and investment promotion agency. By reorganizing internal teams and processes to promote better collaboration, knowledge management roles are now clearly assigned and executed.

ACI has created a tracking database for exchanges to better analyze demand, measure follow up impact and plan future cooperation activities. ACI has also streamlined their international cooperation and study visit request mechanism through redesigning an online portal. In tandem, ACI begun the development of a cooperation calendar to aggregate demand for frequently requested topics.

ACI has been able to attract the active participation of the local agencies in the knowledge exchange process. ACI is now better equipped to engage with key local actors and agencies whose contributions are extremely important. These local agencies have taken ownership of their specific roles in the learning journey. A key outcome was the creation of the "Integrated model for local management of security and coexistence". This model is anchored on six axes namely:

- ▶ Public Private Partnerships and Stewardship
- ▶ Social Innovation
- ▶ Resilience
- ▶ Sense of belonging
- ▶ Community participation in processes
- ▶ Programmatic continuity and long term public policies

A truly collaborative and sustained effort by all key actors brokered by ACI ensured the successful design and delivery of the Medellin Living Lab in 2017. The Living Lab was a pilot on Urban Crime and Violence Prevention in partnership with the World Bank, USAID, and 100 Resilient Cities. This marked an important achievement in the direction of transforming and reinforcing ACI's role as a knowledge broker.